# DISC Newsletter

## An Information Periodical For DISC Employees

## Section Articles

We will be presenting articles from sections within DISC each month.   For November the article is from Customer Support.

## Customer Support: From Green Screens to Windows 2003  by Jerry Merryman

DISC's Customer Support unit originated in the Bureau of Information Systems for the purpose of maintaining user accounts for accessing the IBM mainframe. In 1975, the primary customer interface for computing was the green screen dumb terminal. Personal computers arrived in the early 1980's and Customer Support evolved into the Information Technology Center, a place where people could go to check out this new technology and see how it might enhance agency operations. Later, Customer Support provided user training for word processing, spreadsheet use, and PC Focus, a user programming language. As customers saw the benefits of networking, a server support team was established for Novell, the most widely used network operating system at that time.

After 1990, user demand for more features and functionality increased rapidly. In fact, Customer Support has taken on more functions in the past four years than the previous twenty. Most of these functions go on behind the scenes, largely unnoticed. Some of these include:

### Desktop Repair
Customer Support provides a complete hardware and software repair service for all Department of Administration divisions, including the Governor's Office and the Division of the Budget. Each division has a designated support technician with a primary and secondary backup. This means that several technicians will have knowledge of a customer's needs and requirements. This staff supports 900

computers and laptops, more than 100 printers, 75 servers and related equipment.

### Virus protection.
Customer support provides four levels of virus protection for Department of Administration users. Desktops, servers and the e-mail system are all individually protected from virus attacks. These systems are set to check for new virus protection files every hour and automatically update the department's computers.  Special software is also used to set virus protection manually for new viruses until updated files become available. This software is also used to block spam and infected e-mail attachments.

### Backup and Recovery
The department uses Tivoli Storage Manager to backup its data files to tape. Each night, Tivoli looks for files that have been changed and makes a backup to tape. Periodically, full backups are made of all the data files. These backups are maintained offsite in a storage vault. In the event a data file is deleted by mistake or somehow corrupted, the file can be restored, usually within minutes of retrieving the backup tape. A Customer Support technician monitors the process daily, checking to see that the backups were successful.

### Systems Update
The number of successful computer exploits has risen astronomically in the last two years. The sources range from legitimate security research, malicious mischief, criminal activity

# Customer Support continued

to cyber-warfare. Also, the timeframe between identification of a problem and the release of a real exploit has become very short, sometime only a few days. This means Customer Support has to install updates on every desktop and server. In the past, this meant that technicians had to visit each and every machine to install the update, a process that takes several weeks to complete. Now, this process is mostly automated. An update server automatically sends tested and approved updates to all machines to assure they are safe from exploits.

## File Server Administration
In the past, each division in the department had one or more servers for running computer applications and storing data files. Today, file services are provided by two high capacity severs that are set up in a way that if one fails, the other immediately takes over, providing uninterrupted service. User data files are no longer stored on actual server disk drives. Instead, they are stored on a large-scale network device called a "Shark", that provides high speed, highly reliable service. Through a system of "rights'" and "permissions", technicians can carefully assure proper file segregation and security of those files.

## Print Server Administration
When you send a file to the printer, a network server handles that job, usually the same one where the data files are stores. Customer Support manages a group of servers that do that job rather than a file server. These machines queue up the print jobs, freeing the file server of that work. Using print servers makes more efficient use of file servers and allows greater flexibility for users to access a wider range of printers.

## Intrusion Detection
Customer Support operates an intrusion detection system that is used to monitor the Department of Administration and the entire KanWin network for intruder activity. Monitored events would include hacking attempts, hacking successes, intruders spying on the network, traffic that may indicate an imminent intrusion, information sharing with other computers, instant messages, downloading music or copyrighted material, and visits to sites with prohibited content. The intrusion detection system has also proven to be useful in helping State agencies locate infected machines that need to be cleaned and updated.

## Incident Response
After an intrusion event is identified and verified as risk to the network or Department of Administration assets, Customer Support, in conjunction with the Chief Information Security Officer and other DISC bureaus form an incident response team. This group assesses the level of threat, and oversees activity to remove the threat. Information about the incident is reported to management and law enforcement agencies as is appropriate.

## E-mail Administration
Customer Support maintains more than one thousand user accounts, hundreds of distribution lists, and numerous calendar arrangements. This function routinely processes more than one hundred user requests each week for new user accounts, added features, configuration changes and spam control. E-mail administration also includes handling of virus protection for the e-mail servers.

## Server Asset Management
The Department has a significant investment in its server assets. Customer Support maintains a complete database of server assets that serves as a basis for understanding configuration changes, managing the physical environment and determining replacement schedules. This information in an essential part of disaster recovery planning and would be used as the basis for initial recovery efforts.

## Software Accounting and Administration
The Department has an enterprise license agreement with Microsoft that requires strict accountability for license distribution. This agreement enables the Department to have its own license library and has been the vehicle that made it possible for all users to finally be on the same, currently supported software release.

## Applications Support
In 1999, the Department needed to replace its help desk system that was not year 2000 compliant and could not be repaired. Customer Support acquired and modified an existing help desk system provided at no cost by the Department of Health and Environment. Later, the applications support team replaced an unreliable telecommunications service request system with a custom application. This unit also provides support for portions of the Employee Self Service help desk tracking software, and other custom applications for DISC bureaus.

## Small Agency Support
More than 40 small agencies and licensing boards are without technical resources and cannot justify the

# Customer Support continued

addition of dedicated IT staff. In 1999, the Small Agency Support group was established in response to this need. This team provides all levels if IT support to the small agencies. Their activities include planning and consulting, network design, server and workstation installation and configuration, e-mail service, virus protection, firewall installation and configuration, and telephony consulting. While they work primarily with customers in the Topeka area, they also service agencies in Hutchinson, Wichita, and other outlying areas.

### MVS Security Administration

Customer Support continues to provide the first service that created the bureau. In addition, Customer Support now provides Top Secret administrator services for more than 40 agencies that do not have technical staff.

### Technical Specialties

In addition to the various technical services provided, Customer Support maintains staff having more than 30 technical specialties. The vast majority of staff has earned the Microsoft Certified Software Engineer designation and several are Cisco Certified Network Administrators. The goal of Customer Support is to deploy these skills to provide the Department with a reliable and secure computing environment.



**John Jones providing security training to DISC staff**
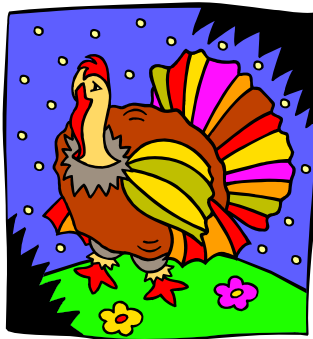
# EMPLOYEE INFO

## Happy November Birthdays to:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dana Jolly | Sharon Luarks | Alicia Etzel |
| Susan Howarter | Denise Moore | Regina Mannell |
| Michael Allen | Laureen Pfannenstiel | Richard Escobar |
| Kelly Penn | Gary Bickel | Liang-Huei Fan |

## New Employee

Laureen
Pfannenstiel
KITO
Started
10/28/2003

## Welcome to the Department Laureen

## Births

Cathy Jones' new grandson, Dalton Wayne, born October 24, 2003

## DEATHS

John Harper's Grandfather

Todd Fritz's Grandmother

## Sorry for your losses, Please accept our sincere condolences.

# Chili Cook-off

We had a great fund raiser, and fun time, in the annual DofA chili cook-off. The department raised over $1,100.00 for United Way during the event. Wow, that seems to be the best ever for a one-day fund raising project! Everyone had a great time, ate chili and dessert for lunch, and contributed to a worthy cause at the same time.

The department winner for traditional chili was Angela Mattocks from DPS, and the nontraditional chili winner was Debbie Esquibel from A&R. The division winners were:

**Administrative Hearing**
Nontraditional—Peggy Graham
Traditional—Nadino Martinez

**DPS**
Nontraditional—Joan Engel
Traditional—Angel Mattocks

**DISC**
Nontraditional—Denise Moore
Traditional—Jerry Merryman

**DFM**
Nontraditional—Michele Bolling
Traditional—Cheryl Buxton

**Legal**
Nontraditional—Allison Burghardt
Traditional—Mary Greb-Hall

**A&R**
Nontraditional—Debbie Esquibel
Traditional—Maye Wegner

The total amount DofA raised for United Way this year is over $38,000. This is an increase of more than $14,000 over last year. Employee participation increased from 23% to 32%. That says a lot about the department effort lead by Jay Coverdale. **Great job Jay!!**



## Chili Chefs



**Tim Blevins, from Revenue was our unbiased taster.**

# Kudos

The following comments were received thanking DISC employees for great work.

**BOT**
Please pass on our thanks to all DISC people who worked to make the first phase of the Harrison Center renovation successful. Everything went like clockwork.
KDOT

**DISC**
Thank you so much for making my birthday so special. I really appreciated the decorations, cards (both electronic and paper), emails, personal wishes and the delightfully amusing gift basket. I couldn't think of a better place to be on my 50th than working with such a dedicated group of people with a wonderful sense of humor. I sincerely appreciate your kindness and generosity.
Denise Moore

**BOT**
I wanted to take time out to convey my appreciation for the efforts of everyone in DISC who helped with the KDHR relocation to 401 SW Topeka. This has been a major project for KDHR and it could not have happened without the commitment, professionalism, and dedication of many DISC employees. Several to be singled out are Theresa Duran, Bob Bernatis, Rick Willoughby, Mike Meyer, Eric Hollaway, and Dana Jolley. There are many others but unfortunately I don't know all their names. Our end users have been very pleased and impressed with the prompt relocation of their voice service and the quality of work for their network connections. It has been a pleasure to work with DISC and its bureaus.
Ron Dugger CISSP
KDHR Information Technology

**BIS**
Joe,
Thanks for the work your staff did to make the equipment move look easy. Having only several items to deal with made everything a lot easier. It's really nice to work with a group like yours. We can really trust your group to get the job done.
Ben Nelson
KDOT

**BOT**
I really appreciate the support DISC has given us on the data center move. Your staff (especially Bob and Dave) seems to be able to work around some of the uncertainties associated with the general building construction dates.
Ben Nelson
KDOT

# Kudos continued

The following comments were received thanking DISC employees for great work.

BIS

Thanks to Jay Coverdale, Beth Zlotky, Dan Rethman, David Dobber, Scott Bickel, Janel Johnson, Kelly Ernst, Lowell Chellberg, Richard Escobar, Susan Howarter, and Terry Nowarter.
I received a call from Larry (DSG) early this morning checking on the new box and in the conversation he said, " boy, you really do have a great group of technicians.  They very calmly and deliberately worked through the various problems we encountered".  What a nice compliment to you all.  You continue to make the organization look good.  I want to add my sincere thanks to you all for a great job.   I'd guess 95% of our mainframe customers are working today without any knowledge of the significant change to their environment over the weekend and that speaks volumes about your work.  DISC is lucky to have such a great staff, and I personally feel so fortunate and thankful.
Joe Hennes

BOCS

Denise: This is extremely late, but I wanted to pass on to you some great work your staff did for us this summer. In July we took on some additional work from KDHE. There is pending legislation that may also increase our workload. In preparing for the work we already took on, as well as the potential increase, Jessie Springer updated our system so our case in-take, case assignment and case accountability for each agency we serve is more easily and more accurately accomplished. Jessie had originally re-created our system a couple of years ago. I sat in on the initial meeting this summer in which Jessie made sure we understood what we wanted, that he understood what we wanted and that we all understood the capabilities, costs and time involved. After the meeting, he got the work done on time and for the amount of money he said it would be done. I know Kurt and his group do great work - but special thanks to Jessie for our project.
Mark Braun
Director OAH

## *Great Job Everyone!*

# Thank You by Angie Feyh

I wanted to send a quick update on my nephew, Daegen Feyh. We were originally told that Daegen would have a Bone Marrow Transplant as last case scenario. The doctors have been discussing Daegen's case with other doctors around the country and most of the doctors agreed that a Bone Marrow Transplant is the best option for Daegen right now. The doctors stated that there is only a one in three chance that the chemotherapy alone would work, but they said that there is a nine in ten chance that the Bone Marrow Transplant would work. They have found a match for Daegen. It is umbilical cord blood from the National Cord Bank. If that does not work, then they will try an adult match.

Daegen is so full of energy. He likes to say, "Look, I'm as free as a bird" when he is at home. He really likes not being hooked up to the IV. He was Bam Bam (His sister was Pebbles!) for Halloween, and he had a great time.

My family would like to thank everyone who contributed to Daegen Feyh Benefit Day on Saturday, October 18, 2003. It was a great success.

# Safe Driving

Here it is almost December, and the weather channel is calling for snow in the near future. So its time to start thinking about preparing your vehicle for winter driving. Here are some tips we have gathered from a few experts in the field.

1. If your car needs a tune-up or is due for regular service, get it done now.
2. Make sure your battery and charging system are up to snuff. If you need a new battery, get the biggest, meanest, ugliest battery that will fit in your car.
3. Check the cooling system, making certain the antifreeze will protect your car for the winter temperatures experienced in this area.
4. If you have leaks in the cooling system, get them taken care of now.
5. Make sure your windshield wipers are in good shape.
6. Keep your gas tank close to full, do not let it get below half a tank in winter. If you let it get too low, water could condense in the tank and freeze. Also, if you get stuck somewhere, your engine will be your only source of heat.
7. Make sure your windshield washer reservoir is full.
8. If you have rear-wheel-drive, especially a pickup, put a few bags of sand over the rear axle, for traction. You will also need a way to keep the sand bags in place.
9. Make sure your rear window defroster works.
10. When driving in snow, do everything slowly and gently. Leave plenty of distance between you and the other car. Even if you do everything right, does not mean the other person will. So be on the alert.
11. Take time to make sure your car is clean and your visibility is good. Clean off the entire car, not just a little peephole in the windshield. Remember to clean the headlights and taillights too.

## Have a Safe Winter